

THE OFFICE ACTION

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claim 69 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite. The Examiner has also rejected claims 1-9, 26-37, 63, 66-69 under 35 U.S.C. § 112(b) as being anticipated by Chaudhuri *et al.* (US 4,508,705), or Mindt *et al.* (US 4,296,234) or Hooper *et al.* (US 4, 278,658).

REMARKS

Applicants have amended the wording of claim 69 by deleting the phrase "an effective amount". Applicants respectfully submit that amended claim 69 is now in full compliance with 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Applicants have further amended claim 69 by specifying that the polysaccharide is a cross-linked polysaccharide. Additionally, claim 69 has been amended by elaborating that the mixture comprising a cross-linked polysaccharide is also used in sanitary napkins, in diapers as well as in incontinence products. The addition of these applications is permissible based on the specification as originally filed [paragraph 45].

Applicants have cancelled claims 1, 2 and 3.

Applicants have amended claim 4 to better define the backbone chain of atoms cross-linking the polysaccharide. More specifically, the backbone chain of atoms defined by formula 2 was amended to specify that the terminal oxygen atoms of the backbone are connected to a polysaccharide, *via* ether linkages. Support for this amendment can be found in the specification as originally filed, more specifically in paragraph 21, which exemplifies a backbone whose terminal oxygens are connected to a starch residue as ether oxygens. Claim 4 has been further amended to improve the language of the claim.

Claims 6 and 7 have been amended to correct clerical errors and to improve the language of the claims.

Claim 9 has been amended in accordance with amended claim 4.

Applicants have canceled claims 26-37, as well as claim 63.

Claim 66 has been amended to correct clerical errors and to improve the language of the claim.

Claim 67 and 68 have been amended to improve the language of the claims.

Applicant has introduced new claims 70-82. Support for the new claims is found in the specification as originally filed. More specifically, support for claims 70 to 73 is found in claims 35-37 and 63 as originally filed, as well as in the specification, paragraphs [0040] and [0041]. New claims 74-82 are product-by-process claims, directed at a process for making the cross-linked polysaccharide as defined in claim 4. Support for new claims 74-82 is to be found in the specification as originally filed. Applicant respectfully submits that new claims 74-82 are drawn to a single inventive concept since these claims are drawn to a cross-linked polysaccharide as defined in claim 4.

Applicants respectfully submit that the amended set of claims, as submitted herewith, successfully overcome the objection under 35 U.S.C. § 112(b), regarding Chaudhuri *et al.*, or Mindt *et al.*, or Hooper *et al.*. The Applicants submit that cross-linked polysaccharides as defined in the amended set of claims are not disclosed by Chaudhuri, Mindt and Hooper. The cross-linked polysaccharides of the present invention, in contrast to those disclosed in the references cited by the learned Examiner, are prepared by reacting an activated polyalkylene glycol with a polysaccharide. This results in a polysaccharide which is cross-linked by a backbone chain of atoms comprising repeating O-Alkylene units, and wherein the terminal oxygen atoms are directly connected to the polysaccharide, *via* ether linkages. Applicants have unexpectedly discovered that such cross-linked polysaccharides have improved absorption properties, making them useful as superabsorbents. It is respectfully submitted that neither Chaudhuri *et al.*, nor Mindt *et al.*, nor Hooper *et al.* teach a cross-linked polysaccharide obtained by reacting a polysaccharide with an activated polyalkylene glycol.

CONCLUSION

For the reasons detailed above, it is respectfully submitted all claims remaining in the application (Claims 4-9, 66-82) are now in condition for allowance.

In the event the Examiner considers personal contact advantageous to the disposition of this case, he/she is hereby authorized to telephone the undersigned, at (216) 861-5582.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

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